

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method for reducing the incorporation of norleucine into a heterologous protein expressed by a microorganism comprising:

modifying a microorganism to co-express a heterologous protein and a non-standard amino acid degrading protein, wherein the expression of the non-standard amino acid degrading protein is increased relative to its expression in the microorganism before said modifying step;

and wherein the non-standard amino acid degrading protein ~~is a glutamate dehydrogenase, leucine dehydrogenase, valine dehydrogenase, phenylalanine dehydrogenase, or glutamate/leucine/phenylalanine/valine dehydrogenase~~ consists essentially of a wild-type *Escherichia coli* glutamate dehydrogenase or an *Escherichia coli* glutamate dehydrogenase having a leucine at the amino acid position that corresponds to amino acid position 92 of said wild-type glutamate dehydrogenase, wherein the amino acid at position 92 of said wild-type glutamate dehydrogenase is a lysine.

Claims 2–3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1 wherein the non-standard amino acid degrading protein comprises SEQ ID NO:2 or 4.

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 4 wherein the non-standard amino acid degrading protein is encoded by a DNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO: 1 or 3.

Claims 6–7. (canceled)

8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the microorganism is *Escherichia coli*.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the expressed heterologous protein is a somatotropin.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 9 wherein the somatotropin is selected from the group consisting of human, equine, bovine, ovine, porcine, canine, and feline somatotropin.

11. (original) The method of claim 9 wherein the somatotropin is bovine somatotropin.

Claims 12–13. (canceled)

14. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the heterologous protein and the non-standard amino acid degrading protein are expressed from a single expression vector.

15. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the heterologous protein and the non-standard amino acid degrading protein are expressed from at least two distinct expression vectors.

Claims 16–41. (canceled)

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the heterologous protein and/or the non-standard amino acid degrading protein is expressed from a location in the microorganism's genome.

Claims 43–49. (canceled)